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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/682,040	07/12/2001	Raman Chandrasekar	1018.134US1	6976

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EXAMINER

AL HASHEMI, SANA A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2171

DATE MAILED: 11/12/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/682,040

Applicant(s)

CHANDRASEKAR ET AL.

Examiner

Sana Al-Hashemi

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 15 September 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 and 28-30 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 and 28-30 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

This is in response to the amendment filed on 9/15/03 in which Claims 1-17, and 28-30 are presented for examination.

Claim Status: 1- 17, and 28-30, are rejected.

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-17, and 28-30 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 1-17 and 28-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Woods (US Patent No. 6,282,538) in view of Curtis et al. (US Patent No. 6,278,992).

1. Regarding Claims 1, 9, and 28, Woods discloses a method for refining a user query, the method comprising:

receiving a query from a user (see column 4, lines 10-17, Woods);

mapping the user query to one or more search concepts (see Fig. 1, step 30, column 4, lines 26-35, Woods); and

Woods does not explicitly disclose the method of displaying a list of the search concepts associated with the query. However, Curtis teaches the method of displaying a list of search

concepts associated with the query (see column Fig. 32A, and 32B, column 25, lines 17-67, Curtis). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to add/modify the Wood's system by associating a search concept list to the query with the motivation of improving the search results and providing the user with more choices in response the their queries.

2. Regarding Claims 2, and 10, the combination of Woods and Curtis discloses a method further comprising initiating, upon the user's request, a preferred query associated with at least one of the one or more search concepts to provide improved search results (see column 4, lines 36-45, Woods).

3. Regarding Claims 3, and 12, the combination of Woods and Curtis discloses a method wherein the one or more search concepts are popular search concepts and wherein their relative popularity can be used to order the displayed list (see Fig. 4, step 12, column 6, lines 14-19, Woods).

4. Regarding Claims 4, and 13, the combination of Woods and Curtis discloses a method further comprising, for the one or more search concepts, adding a number of popularity points to the concept for each of a plurality of different query phrases that matches one of a plurality of key phrases associated with the concept and that is unique to the concept, wherein the number of popularity points is proportional to a number of times the query phrase appears in a query log (see column 6, lines 20-38, Woods).

5. Regarding Claims 5, and 14, the combination of Woods and Curtis discloses a method wherein initiating the preferred search query comprises selecting a key phrase uniquely associated with the concept and having a greatest popularity for the concept within the query log

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as indicated by popularity points added to the matching concept as a result of the key phrase matching a query phrase within the query log (see column 6, lines 29-40, Woods).

6. Regarding Claims 6, and 15, the combination of Woods and Curtis discloses a method further comprising apportioning a number of popularity points among two or more of the search concepts when a plurality of different query phrases match one of a plurality of key phrases associated with the two or more search concepts, wherein the number of popularity points is proportional to the number of times the query phrase appears in the query log (see Fig. 4, step 10, column 6, lines 50-54, Woods).

7. Regarding Claims 7, and 16, the combination of Woods and Curtis discloses a method further comprising determining a popularity measure of the search concept as a function of the popularity points of the search concept and the popularity points of a most popular one of the one or more search concepts (see column 6, lines 55-63, Woods).

8. Regarding Claims 8, and 17, the combination of Woods and Curtis discloses a method wherein the method is performed by execution of instructions stored on a computer-readable medium (see column 3, lines 62-67, Woods).

9. Regarding Claim 11, the combination of Woods and Curtis discloses a method wherein the set of improved search results comprises one or more sub-sets of the set of improved search results, each sub-set associated with one of the search concepts and having a number of search results proportional to a relative popularity of the one or more concepts (see Fig. 4, step 7, column 6, lines 64-67, Woods).

10. Regarding Claim 29, the combination of Woods and Curtis discloses a system wherein the server is a search engine and the client is a web browser (see column 4, lines 11-15, Woods).

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11. Regarding Claim 30, Woods discloses a system wherein the server and the client are applications (see column 3, lines 62-67, Woods).

Points of Contact

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to: Sana Al-Hashemi whose telephone number is (703) 305-4881. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM.. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Safet Metjahic, can be reached on (703) 308-1436. Any response to this office action should be mailed to: The Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231. Or telefax at phone number (703) 872-9306. For formal or draft communications, please label "PROPOSED" or "DRAFT". Hand-delivered response should be brought to Crystal Park II, 2121 Crystal Drive, 6th Floor Receptionist, Arlington, Virginia. 22202.

Sana Al-Hashemi
Patent Examiner
Technology Center 2100
November 4, 2003


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